

THE STRANGE CASE OF HIMMLER'S DOCTOR

Felix Kersten and Count Bernadotte

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FELIX KERSTEN was Heinrich Himmler's personal doctor during the Second World War; he has also been decorated for outstanding services to humanity during the same period. This combination of activities might well seem a paradox; and since paradox naturally generates controversy, Kersten has been the center, since the war, of a good deal of controversy—from which, however, he has at last emerged triumphant. Since historical accident drew me into this controversy, and human interest prevented me from dropping it till I had satisfied myself on every point, I may claim an intimate knowledge of the matter, and it gives me great pleasure to be able to publish the facts.

First, how did Kersten achieve the strange position of Himmler's doctor—and indeed more than doctor, for he was, as he has himself admitted, almost a "father-confessor" to that terrible ogre of the Third Reich. It is a cosmopolitan story, for Kersten is a cosmopolitan figure—at least a North European cosmopolitan. A Balt of Germanic origin, born in Estonia in 1898, and therefore originally a Russian subject, he fought in 1918 as a volunteer in the Finnish war of liberation against Russia. In 1920 he became a Finnish subject. Thereafter he studied manual therapy in Berlin under a famous Chinese specialist, Dr. Ko, and quickly be-

came himself one of the most successful practitioners of this unorthodox but valuable art. His professional success began in Germany, where the aristocracy and the plutocracy of the 1920's alike resorted to him; but since both these classes are international, their patronage soon carried him abroad. Thus, among the aristocracy, Duke Adolf Friedrich of Mecklenburg passed him on to his brother, Prince Hendrik, the husband of Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands. This was one of the most important incidents in Kersten's career, for in time he became a member of the Prince's household and made his home in Holland.

But he practiced in Germany too, and there another recommendation led to even greater consequences. This time it came from the plutocracy. In March 1939 his patient, Dr. August Diehn, president of the German Potassium Syndicate, approached Kersten with a peculiarly urgent request. "Herr Kersten," he said, "I have never asked a favor from you before; now I have one to ask. Will you examine Heinrich Himmler? I think you would find him an interesting patient. Besides, if you succeed with him, you may do us a great service. Perhaps you can persuade him not to nationalize private industry."

Kersten examined Himmler. He found that he suffered from intestinal spasms, causing great pain, sometimes unconsciousness. Hitherto doctors had treated him with narcotics and injections, but without effect. Kersten treated him manually and the result was astonishing: in five minutes the pain was relieved. Himmler was delighted: he begged Kersten to remain in personal attendance upon him; but Kersten refused. The war had not yet broken out; Himmler was not yet able to command; he was there-

H. R. TREVOR-ROPER, the well-known historian of *The Last Days of Hitler* (1947), here searches out another mystery of Nazi times. The present article forms, with some changes, the introduction to *The Kersten Memoirs 1940-1945*, which Macmillan is bringing out this month. Mr. Trevor-Roper lectures in history at Oxford. His most recent article in *COMMENTARY* was "The 'Mystery' of Hitler's Death" (July 1956).

fore forced to remain as merely one of those German patients whom Kersten would attend in the course of his regular professional visits to Germany from his base in Holland.

Such at least was the intention: the issue was different. For by next spring—the spring of 1940—when Kersten visited Germany, a state of war existed, and it was while Kersten was actually in Berlin that the German armies suddenly invaded Holland and cut off his retreat. The Dutch royal family fled to England. It was therefore with all the advantages of power, and against a background of threats, that Himmler now repeated his demands to Kersten. Faced with the alternative of the court or the concentration camp, Kersten chose freedom: he became the personal medical advisor to the Grand Inquisitor of the Third Reich: the extraordinary part of history began.

To us, living and having always lived in a liberal society, the position of court doctors in the Third Reich must always seem extraordinary. What power was wielded, at Hitler's court, by his doctors, what vertiginous politics surrounded them, what devouring intrigues divided them! I have described elsewhere those strange events, which Bormann's letters, written from the very center of the court, have since vividly illustrated.^{1*} Himmler's court was hardly different; nor is the explanation really so far to seek. All tyrants, isolated in dangerous eminence—especially if they are, like Himmler, fundamentally weak men—require confidants whom (perhaps wrongly) they suppose to be outside the vortex of political rivalry around them. Court fools, astrologers, priests, mistresses—all these have filled a classic role in the past. The modern valetudinarian despots have given the same role to their doctors. Hitler relied on Morell and (until he was ruined by Morell) Brandt; Himmler upon Gebhard and Kersten. To him Kersten, upon whom he became more and more dependent, was always "my good Dr. Kersten," "the magic Buddha" (as he

described him to Count Ciano) "who cures everything by massage";² he addressed him in almost tender terms, allowed him great liberties, listened calmly to the most outrageous requests; and Kersten, holding as he did the keys of physical salvation, became to Himmler the all-powerful confessor who could manipulate at will the conscience as well as the stomach of that terrible, impersonal, inhuman, but naive, mystical, credulous tyrant of the New Order.

How did Kersten use these extraordinary opportunities? The facts are now well attested. Thousands of Dutchmen, Germans, Jews, and indeed others owe their survival to his intercession. All who sought respite for doomed men and women learned gradually where it was most useful to turn. The Finnish legation in Germany used him to rescue Norwegian and Danish prisoners;³ the World Jewish Congress credits him with the rescue of 60,000 Jews;⁴ particularly he devoted himself to the interests of Holland which, before the war, had become his real home. Thus in 1941 Hitler proposed to transport up to three million "irreconcilable" Dutchmen to Polish Galicia and the Ukraine and referred the execution of the proposal to Himmler. Fortunately Himmler happened at that time to be in a low state of health and particularly dependent on Kersten. Kersten persuaded him that the additional strain on his health of carrying out so vast an operation might well be fatal. The operation was therefore postponed till after the war. Himmler afterwards regretted his weakness in this matter. The Führer's decision, he sadly admitted, had been right; its postponement "was all the fault of my wretched health and the good Dr. Kersten."⁵

Of course this loophole in the system of terror was noted at Himmler's court. Some, the more liberal—for even at Himmler's court there were some relatively liberal men, officials who obeyed orders without much conscience indeed but without any positive desire for blood—took advantage of it: Himmler's secretary, Rudolf Brandt, for instance, and his chief of intelligence, Walter

*Numbered footnotes appear at the end of this article.

Schellenberg. These men continually referred the cases of condemned men to Kersten as the only man who could cause a sentence to be reversed or suspended. Others, of course, held the opposite view—particularly Ernst Kaltenbrunner, the Austrian thug who controlled, under Himmler, all security in the Reich. Kaltenbrunner would gladly have seen Kersten liquidated; but Kersten's position with Himmler was too strong. As Himmler once said to Kaltenbrunner, "If Kersten is bumped off, you will not survive him by twenty-four hours." So the loophole continued to leak; the gas-chambers and the firing-squads were quietly cheated; and Himmler himself saw perfectly well what was happening, but could do nothing: "Kersten massages a life out of me," he once said, "with every rub."⁶

By 1943 Kersten's empire over the mind of Himmler was so complete that he decided to emancipate himself from that too exclusive dependence upon him to which the war had condemned him. Since Holland no longer existed, he sought for another neutral state in Northern Europe and told Himmler that he now wished to move his home and family to Sweden. Himmler was dissatisfied: he did not wish to lose Kersten. But by now it was not Himmler who could threaten: the personal relationship between the two men had changed since 1940; and when Kersten gave Himmler the choice of never being visited by him again or of being visited occasionally from Sweden, Himmler resigned himself reluctantly to the second alternative. In 1943, therefore, Kersten, while keeping the German property, Gut Hartzwalde, which he had bought in 1934 with his blocked German earnings, moved his base to Stockholm. This move marked another important stage in his career: it made him the agent of the Swedish government in its humanitarian work at the close of the war, and, indirectly, it led to the attempts which have since been made to transfer to others the credit for his work.

Kersten's first important work for Sweden⁷ consisted in his long and ultimately successful battle to save the lives of seven Swedish

businessmen, representatives of the Swedish Match Syndicate, who had been arrested by the Germans in Warsaw on a charge of espionage. It was the Berlin lawyer, Dr. Langbehn—afterwards executed as an anti-Nazi—who first suggested to the company's representatives in Berlin that Kersten "would probably contrive to massage the men out"; and sure enough, in the end, Kersten secured the release of all of them, including four who had been condemned to death, and in December 1944 he was allowed to take the last three of them back to Sweden with him as a personal "Christmas present" from Himmler.⁸ In the early stages of these negotiations Kersten became personally acquainted with the then Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Herr Christian Günther, and from that time he became an agent of Günther in Swedish humanitarian work in Germany. In the winter of 1944-45, when the defeat of Germany seemed at last imminent, this Swedish intervention became of international significance.

FOR what, in the last convulsions of Nazi Germany, would be the fate of occupied Scandinavia—of Denmark and Norway? Hitler had ordered the German armies to fight to the end everywhere. Could Sweden, the only neutral Scandinavian power, see her neighbors thus uselessly destroyed? And what would be the fate of the hundreds of thousands of prisoners—including Danes and Norwegians—in German concentration camps? Hitler had given orders that on the approach of the Allied armies all concentration camps were to be blown up and their inmates slaughtered. Policy and humanity alike required that Sweden intervene to prevent such useless destruction, such insensate murder. But where could such intervention be made? Where indeed but at the court of Himmler, the only alternative to the court of Hitler. Hitler ordered, but it was Himmler who executed—or stayed the execution; and to the ear of Himmler, Günther now had a direct private line in the person of Felix Kersten.

Thus the plan was made, in Stockholm,

between Günther and Kersten and, after long preparation, Kersten duly presented himself to Himmler in Germany to see whether the tyrant, in the last days, would heed the voice of prudence and persuasion. Would he, asked Kersten, allow all Scandinavian prisoners to be sent to Sweden and be interned there? No, said Himmler, that was too difficult. Then would he, asked Kersten, allow all Scandinavian prisoners to be concentrated in one camp from which, if necessary, they could be transported to Sweden? To this Himmler agreed—provided that Sweden, not Germany, were responsible for supplying the transport for their removal.

He agreed to allow into Germany—secretly of course—up to a hundred and fifty omnibuses to transport the prisoners to Sweden. Apart from the Danish and Norwegian prisoners, Himmler further promised, as a personal gift to Kersten, the lives of 1,000 Dutch women, 1,500 French women, 500 Polish women, and 400 Belgians, provided he could obtain asylum for them in Sweden, and 2,700 Jews to be transported to Switzerland. The prisoners for Sweden would be concentrated in the camp at Neuengamme. This agreement between Himmler and Kersten was made on 8th December, 1944, and confirmed in writing on 21st December. On 22nd December Kersten arrived back in Sweden and reported to Günther the barely hoped for success of his mission.

All that remained to do was to send the omnibuses. By February 1945 this had been arranged. A column of a hundred omnibuses of the Swedish Red Cross was marshaled and set out for Germany. These were known as "the white buses"; they were under the command of Colonel (now General) Gottfried Björk; and they were accompanied by the vice president of the Swedish Red Cross, an important social figure whom Kersten now, at Günther's request, announced by telephone to Himmler, Count Folke Bernadotte.

Folke Bernadotte played so large and, it will seem to some, so surprising a part in the rest of this story that it seems necessary to pause and forestall any possible misunder-

standing. Since he is dead and cannot answer any charge, it is important that he should not be hastily accused or his motives rashly imputed. Nevertheless, the facts, amply documented, are clear. They show that he first sought to fill a larger role than had been assigned to him, and that afterwards, in a foolish attempt to monopolize the glory of the achievement, he allowed himself to claim a position which could only be defended by unfortunate exhibitionism and unfair persecution.

How an essentially honorable man allowed himself to slide into such courses can only be surmised. Possibly to an energetic, if not very intelligent, man the position of a mere ambassador seemed inadequate. Possibly to a naive, rather vain man, unaccustomed to delicate and complex negotiations, his own part genuinely seemed more important than it was. Possibly there were many in Sweden who, uneasily conscious of an inglorious neutrality during the war, were only too eager to build up a Swedish prince as hero of the peace. And it should be remembered that many of Himmler's court, apprehending an early day of judgment, were only too eager to clutch at the visiting Folke Bernadotte, the kinsman of the neutral King of Sweden, as a future patron and protector whose vanity it was worth their while to flatter, and by flattery to delude. At all events, whatever the motives which led him afterwards to make his improper claims, Count Bernadotte paid dearly for them. But for the self-glorifying myth which he manufactured, it is unlikely that he would ever have been chosen as UN mediator in the Arab-Jewish war of 1948, or fallen in Palestine a premature victim of the assassin's bullet.

I HAVE called Bernadotte a "mere ambassador." By this I mean that although he was empowered to discuss matters of detail with Himmler, he had no power to initiate or negotiate policy. Indeed, there was no policy left for him to initiate or to negotiate, for it had already been initiated by Günther and negotiated with Himmler by Kersten.

Nevertheless, through Bernadotte's ignorance of policy, or perhaps through lack of clarity in explaining it to him, misunderstandings soon arose. For since his treaty with Himmler of 8th December, Kersten had been making, in concert with Günther, further arrangements.

In particular, he had promised the Swedish branch of the World Jewish Congress to secure the release to Sweden, if possible, of a further 3,500 Jewish prisoners. To this Himmler had agreed, but suddenly Bernadotte (to the surprise of Himmler and dismay of Kersten) refused to handle non-Scandinavian prisoners. In the end, however, after a visit by Kersten to Günther in Stockholm, these difficulties were all overcome,⁹ and on 21st April Kersten's work for the Jews culminated in one of the most ironical incidents in the whole war: the secret meeting, at Kersten's house Hartzwalde, between Himmler, the arch-persecutor of the Jews, and Norbert Masur, a member of the Board of the Stockholm branch of the World Jewish Congress, whom Kersten had personally brought from Sweden for that purpose.

That astonishing interview has been described elsewhere, by Masur himself;¹⁰ in it the last details were arranged; and two hours later Himmler told Bernadotte that the Jews were free to go to Sweden—"I have promised my good Dr. Kersten and I must keep my promise; besides I have fixed all the details with Herr Masur"; and Bernadotte duly took them and was presented by a rabbi in Stockholm with a laudatory scroll.¹¹

It is important to note that although Bernadotte seems to have been understood by Himmler as using the language of anti-Semitism—which may have been a tactical necessity—there is no reason to suppose that his motive in refusing to take the Jews was anti-Semitic. Indeed the evidence points in the other direction, for Bernadotte also refused to take French and Polish prisoners. It seems that he genuinely misunderstood his instructions, thinking that he was only authorized to take Scandinavians.

Meanwhile, on 12th March Kersten had completed Günther's program by signing another treaty with Himmler. By this treaty¹² Himmler undertook not to carry out Hitler's order to blow up the concentration camps on the approach of the Allied armies, but to surrender them, under the white flag, with all their inmates, and to stop all further execution of Jews. Finally, on the night of 21st-22nd April, Himmler asked Kersten to forward an offer of surrender to the Allies. Kersten declined to meddle in politics and referred him to Bernadotte, who duly passed the message on to Stockholm.

Thus, in the last weeks of the Third Reich, the policy whereby so many lives were saved was the policy of the Swedish government; the essential negotiator, but for whose influence that policy could not have been made effective, was Felix Kersten; the Jews owe a considerable debt to the intervention of Hr. Masur; Count Bernadotte could claim the honorable role of an instrument chosen to supply the technical but also essential means of execution.

UNFORTUNATELY Bernadotte was not content with this role. No sooner was the war over than he was suddenly thrust before the public as the man who, on his own initiative, had both conceived and executed the whole plan. He alone, it was stated, by facing the hitherto implacable Himmler in his den, had managed the tyrant and, by managing him, rescued Jews and Gentiles from death in the concentration camps. He was even credited with having ended the war. He was hailed as the Prince of Peace, the savior, and, after his death, the martyr of humanity. Much of this deplorable ballyhoo is not his responsibility. It would be unfair, for instance, to blame him for the inspired hagiography which, since his death, has only made him undeservedly ridiculous; but he cannot disclaim the three books which he himself wrote, the first of which, more than anything else, provided the nucleus of the legend.

This book was entitled, in Swedish, *Slutet*—in the English version, *The Fall of the*

Curtain—and one of the most interesting facts about it is the speed with which it was produced. In spite of a disarming preface in which Bernadotte declared that it was only with great reluctance that he had yielded to the pressure of friends and consented to write this account of his actions, the book appeared in the shops within six weeks of the events it described. Further, large parts of it had been ghost-written, at high speed, by Himmler's former chief of intelligence, Walter Schellenberg, who, at the end of the war, had taken refuge in Bernadotte's house in Stockholm and who (since he had a war crime on his conscience¹³) was eager to deserve Swedish protection.

In fairness to Schellenberg it should be noted that in his draft (of which he still had a copy in his possession when he was finally surrendered to the Allies) some credit was given to Kersten and Masur for their work in the last days. Only from Bernadotte's final version were both these names altogether omitted. Even Günther, the Foreign Minister who had conceived the plan, received no recognition in Bernadotte's book. In that book the whole operation was presented as the conception and achievement of one great humanitarian, Folke Bernadotte.¹⁴

It seems that Count Bernadotte himself expected some opposition to his claims, for according to Kersten, one or two days before the appearance of the book he received a telephone call from Bernadotte advising him, somewhat bluntly, not to make any adverse comments on the forthcoming work if he did not wish to be sent back, as a Finnish subject, to Finland—then under Communist regime.

I would not mention this detail, since it comes from Kersten himself who may perhaps have misunderstood Bernadotte's drift, were it not that it is partly confirmed by Schellenberg, to whom Bernadotte declared the same afternoon that he had given Kersten a "knock-out blow" by telephone, and by an affidavit from the former Dutch ambassador in Stockholm, the Baron van Nagell, to whom Kersten promptly appealed for

support. Baron van Nagell at once obtained an assurance from Günther that Kersten would never be molested. He also called personally on Bernadotte. "I was only allowed to see him for five minutes in the Swedish Red Cross Office," he writes, "but that was enough. I quickly reminded him that Dr. Kersten had done all the work and that he [Bernadotte] had only been charged by the Swedish government to transport the released prisoners to Sweden. Finally Count Bernadotte had to admit that the rescue, ascribed to him alone, actually had two phases: first, the release of the prisoners from the camps in Germany, which was achieved by Dr. Kersten alone; and secondly, his [Bernadotte's] transport of the released prisoners."¹⁵

Unfortunately a private verbal admission, however welcome, cannot effectively cancel a public and written claim contained in a best-selling book translated into a dozen languages. And unfortunately it must be added that this is not the only instance in which Bernadotte sought to prevent the publication of any version of these events except his own.

THIS public theft of the credit for his secret services was soon followed, for Kersten, by a more material blow. To protect himself against the possibility of extradition (which perhaps he overrated) Kersten soon afterward applied for Swedish citizenship, and his application was strongly supported by Hr. Günther, the one man who really knew about his secret work for Sweden. A correct understanding of Kersten's humanitarian work was important, Günther wrote, "since a number of earlier descriptions, especially of the relief work among concentration-camp prisoners, have given—unconsciously no doubt—incorrect proportions to the achievements of the various actors."

Unfortunately for Kersten, in July 1945 the coalition government of which Günther was a minister fell from power in Sweden, and the new rulers of the Foreign Office adopted a different attitude towards the inconvenient foreign agent of their predeces-

sors. According to later revelations by the Swedish press¹⁶ they refused even to reimburse Kersten his traveling expenses to and from Germany on behalf of the Swedish government, and these had to be met by private subscription. And Kersten's application for Swedish citizenship, in spite of Günther's support, was suddenly, at the last minute, refused.¹⁷ It had become clear, the Dutch information officer in Sweden wrote to his headquarters soon after the change of government, that "Kersten's presence will be tolerated by the Swedes only if he keeps himself in the background."¹⁸

THUS the name of the inconvenient Kersten was thrust back into obscurity and the genuine merits of Count Bernadotte were altogether buried behind the romantic myth of the national hero, which the irreversible machine of high-powered publicity was now thrusting before the world. It seemed that the truth would never emerge. For who knew the truth? A few Swedes—but how could they now resist the great name of Bernadotte in which so much national capital had been sunk? A few Germans, but why should they advertise the fact that they had been Himmler's councilors? A few Jews—but in September 1948 Bernadotte was brutally murdered by Israeli extremists and a sense of guilt inhibited that nation from seeming, by however light or relative a censure, retrospectively to justify the crime. Fortunately there was a fourth category of those who knew the facts. In Holland there are no such inhibitions; and so it was in Holland that the truth ultimately began to emerge.

In 1948 murmurs of the injustice done to Kersten reached the Dutch government, and at the instance of Professor N. W. Posthumus, the distinguished economic historian who was then director of the Dutch Institute of War Documentation, a special commission, consisting of one historian and two members of the Dutch Foreign Office,¹⁹ was set up to inquire into the facts of Kersten's work during the war. Having collected, tested, and examined numbers of witnesses

and hundreds of documents, the commission made its report in 1949.

This report, which has been invaluable to me in my researches into the same subject, proved all the charges made against Kersten—charges of having been a Nazi, or of having made financial profit out of his rescue work—to be malicious and untrue, and established the fact that Kersten had saved thousands of lives of all nationalities, on numerous occasions and at great personal risk and expense, besides saving Dutch people from transportation, Dutch art treasures from confiscation, and Dutch cities and installations (the City of The Hague and the Zuyder Zee dam) from destruction. In consequence of this report which was at first kept secret but has since been released, Kersten was made a Grand Officer of the Order of Orange-Nassau, receiving the insignia from Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands in August 1950.

In Sweden, committed to a rival version of the facts, this foreign recognition made at first little impact. The Dutch report received there no publicity. A copy of it sent with a personal letter to the new Swedish Foreign Minister, Herr Oesten Undén, was not acknowledged. In 1952 Kersten's application for citizenship was again rejected. In 1952 therefore, having myself by this time made extensive independent inquiries, I decided to publish the facts. This I did in an article in the American magazine *Atlantic Monthly* for January 1953.

This article, which for the first time stated the facts about Bernadotte's attempt to monopolize the credit, created something of a sensation in Sweden, and the Swedish Foreign Office was moved to issue an official communiqué upon it. The communiqué denied some of my conclusions, but as it quoted no evidence of any kind, only darkly hinting at papers among the archives of the Foreign Office, I do not regard it as convincing.²⁰

Shortly afterwards, however, a document was published which, being a year old, may well have been the basis of the communiqué, as it also appears to have been the justifica-

tion for the refusal of Kersten's citizenship in 1952. This was a *pro-memoria* on the case of Dr. Kersten written by Dr. Uno Willers, who, at the time of writing, had been head of the Swedish Foreign Office Archives: an extraordinary document which simply repeats, without evidence, all the old charges already disproved in detail by the Dutch Parliamentary Commission. Its intellectual character is sufficiently shown by its statement that Kersten's "fascist tendencies" are proved by his participation in the Finnish war of liberation of 1918. Professor Posthumus, in a reply to Dr. Willers, had no difficulty in disposing of such rubbish.²¹ Point by point he traced Dr. Willers's allegations to their sources and proved their falsity, and he even showed that the Swedish archivist, in his zeal to discredit certain documents, had been misled by an inability to distinguish between original documents and carbon copies.

Even in Sweden this grotesque document only brought the Ministry into contempt. Five members of the Riksdag challenged the government on its treatment of Kersten, roundly declaring that it had refused citizenship to a public benefactor on the basis of a worthless and malicious compilation. On

29th April, 1953, a stormy debate took place in the Riksdag in the course of which the Swedish government's treatment of Kersten was roughly criticized as small-minded and ungrateful. Six months later the government yielded. On 30th October, 1953, Felix Kersten was admitted to Swedish citizenship. Truth had triumphed over slander.²²

SUCH, in brief outline, is the story of Felix Kersten and the work for humanity which he contrived to perform as a foreigner, without any power except the power of physical and intellectual manipulation, at Himmler's headquarters. No man's story would seem at first sight less credible, and most of those who have first heard it—including Professor Posthumus himself, the inspirer of the Dutch commission—have greeted it with skepticism; but no man's story has undergone a more searching scrutiny. It has been examined by scholars, lawyers, and hostile politicians. And it has emerged triumphant. Human memory and human judgment are always fallible, but as far as honesty of purpose and authenticity of documentation are concerned I am pleased to support with such authority as I possess the accuracy of the memoirs of Felix Kersten.

1. *The Last Days of Hitler*, 2nd ed., 1950, pp. 65-79; *The Bormann Letters* (1954) *passim*.

2. Ciano, *Diary*, 7th October, 1942.

3. Affidavits by Henrik Ramsay (Finnish Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1943-4), 13th June, 1949, and by Professor T. M. Kivimäki (Finnish Minister to Berlin, 1940-4), 5th December, 1948.

4. Memorandum of World Jewish Congress (Qd. A. Spivak & G. Storch), Stockholm, 18th June, 1947.

5. Report of Dutch Parliamentary *Enquête-commissie*, 1950; since confirmed by depositions of Ludwig Pemsel, 27th March, 1952, and Major-General Franz Muller-Dachs, 28th September, 1949. The plan to colonize the Ukraine with Dutchmen in 1941 is confirmed by Hitler's *Table-Talk* (1953), p. 25.

6. Interrogation of Fräulein Schienke (Schellenberg's secretary) in England, 19th December, 1945.

7. The first approach by Sweden to Kersten had already been made by the Swedish ambassador in Berlin, Herr Richert, in the summer of 1942.

8. The best, because reluctant, testimony to Kersten's work in this matter is contained in

the record of the trial at Nuremberg of Walter Schellenberg. Schellenberg tried to claim that it was he who had saved the men, but as the witnesses were examined it became clear (as the Court observed) that their rescue was really the work of the then completely unknown Dr. Kersten.

9. At a meeting at the Swedish Foreign Office on 27th March, 1945, as confirmed by an official minute kindly quoted to me by Herr Aström, counsellor of the Swedish embassy in London.

10. Norbert Masur, *En Jude talar med Himmler* (Stockholm, 1945). Some difference of opinion has since arisen between Dr. Kersten and Herr Masur as to the relative importance, in connection with the release of the Jews, of Himmler's promises to Kersten before 21st April and his agreement with Masur on that date. After a careful study of the contemporary Swedish, Jewish, and Dutch evidence available to me, and an interesting discussion with Herr Masur, I think it safe to conclude that Himmler undoubtedly made general promises to Kersten in March 1945, but that it needed Masur's bold personal visit to bring these promises into clear practical form.

11. Bernadotte's initial refusal to take non-Scandinavian prisoners is confirmed by an affidavit by Gottlob Berger, Himmler's chief of staff, of 26th May, 1952. I have seen what purports to be a copy, made by Rudolph Brandt, Himmler's secretary, of a very explicit private letter of 10th March, 1945, from Bernadotte to Himmler on this subject; but since its authenticity cannot be proved, I prefer to disregard it for the time being. According to Berger, Bernadotte sent private letters (i.e. not on Red Cross notepaper and presumably not filed in the Red Cross files) to Himmler, and these letters were not among those which Himmler is known to have destroyed. If so, the originals may turn up among Himmler's papers now in America.

12. Of which a carbon copy survives and has been authenticated by the Dutch *Enquête-commissie*. The original was seen by Baron van Nagell, to whom Kersten showed it in Stockholm on 23rd March, 1943. Baron van Nagell has testified as to its form and contents.

13. In 1939 Schellenberg, as a Gestapo officer, had been responsible for the kidnapping, on neutral Dutch territory, of two British intelligence officers, Captain Best and Major Stevens. This incident, which was of course contrary to all rules of war, and in the course of which a Dutchman was killed, preyed heavily on Schellenberg's mind at the end of the war.

14. Bernadotte was very energetic in spreading his own fame. On 17th April, 1947, he wrote to me suggesting that I had given insufficient attention to his achievements in my book *The Last Days of Hitler*, and he afterwards had his letter to me published in Sweden. Later, I discovered that he had sent copies of

his letter to me to some prominent Englishmen.

15. Affidavit by Baron van Nagell, 3rd October, 1949; letter to me from Baron van Nagell, 3rd March, 1953, Cf. also *Aftonbladet*, Stockholm, 23rd April, 1953.

16. *Aftonbladet*, Stockholm, 23rd and 24th April, 1953.

17. According to a letter from the Dutch ambassador in Helsinki (Mr. van der Vlugt) to his government, the refusal was made at the instance of Count Bernadotte.

18. Report of Mr. Dijkmeester, the Dutch information officer at Stockholm, 22nd November, 1945.

19. The members of the Commission were Mr. Snouck Hurgronje (Secretary General of the Foreign Office), Mr. Van Schelle (Counsellor of the Embassy), and Professor A. J. Rüter of the University of Leiden.

20. The communiqué was issued on 3rd February, 1953. I replied in detail in *Svenska Dagbladet*, 4th March, 1953, and, in English, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, April 1953.

21. Letter from Professor Posthumus to the Nobel Committee of the Norwegian Storting, 10th June, 1953.

22. When the storm had died down, a balanced account of "the Bernadotte Expedition" was published in *Dagens Nyheter*, 1-4 February, 1954. This account, by Ulf Brandell, gives his proper due to Dr. Kersten. In April 1956 the Swedish Foreign Office published a "White Book" on the whole subject entitled *1945 Ars Svenska Hjälpexpedition till Tyskland*, which criticizes my presentation of the facts but not, in my opinion, effectively, and incidentally admits all my major points. My answer to it was published in *Dagens Nyheter*, 26th April, 1956.